TAFT TALK

No. 67 *Newsletter of the Taft Family Association* Dec 2014

John Allen Taft and Emogene Prudence "Gene" Stockwell

Member Dorothy Taft Barre wrote to us recently about her grandparents and said "I have one sister, Marjorie Taft Fyfe. We grew up in Oxford, MA where our grandfather was John Allen Taft, a Civil War veteran…. I am a WWII Veteran – Army nurse. I was 1 year old on their 60th wedding anniversary.

60th Wedding Anniversary celebrated in Mendon, MA

"Mr. and Mrs. John A. Taft are today celebrating the 60th anniversary of their marriage at their home on Sutton St. … have four children and nine grand-children all of whom were with them to dinner except The Allen Tafts of Los Angeles, CA…. The home was prettily decorated with wild flowers. During the afternoon open house was kept and many relatives and friends called…"

John A. Taft was a native of Mendon and a descendant of Gen. Ethan Allen. Mrs. Taft was the daughter of James Stockwell of Sutton and at the age of 15 years was married at the Methodist parsonage in Oxford by Rev. Daniel Wait to Mr. Taft who was then 23 years of age. His father, Allen Taft, died when he was about 11 years of age and her father, Rev. James Stockwell, died when she was about nine years old.

"John A. Tafft" was listed in the 1860 Census as a carpenter in Killingly, CT. Emogene "Gene" Stockwell worked as a weaver in a North Oxford mill until her marriage; then when her husband was in the Civil War she again worked in the mill. In a letter written by her sister Elvira in 1858 Emogene was described as "Quite fleshy, Rather plain, though smart look. Keen eye. Looks like Uncle Augustus and Cousin George Stockwell. Looks like you, Louise, rather than any of the rest, but not near as good-looking."

The couple settled at Rochdale where Mr. Taft worked at his trade of carpenter. At the outbreak of the Civil War, John Taft enlisted in D Co., 25th Infantry Mass Volunteers and saw a great deal of service. For a time he held the office of chief dock and bridge builder with a detail of 1500 men, He was also harbor master at New Berne, NC; and while in that position he had dinner one day with Gen. U.S. Grant. "After the capture of New Berne, NC he was detailed to build an 1800 foot bridge across the river and he did his work so thoroughly that the structure is in use today (1919)."

"For many years Mr. Taft was superintendent of D.N. Taft mill at North Oxford, retiring because of failing health. Until about ten years ago they made their home in North Oxford where they owned a beautiful residence. Mr. Taft

Cont. on page 7

Since the last newsletter we have received a few responses from people offering to help the Taft Family Association. Here are the tasks involved in the various positions – perhaps you can join us.

President: The duties include the usual for a small board, including convening meetings, being the representative for the TFA when needed, and leading the TFA forward. This position at times has included responding and directing queries to the correct person. Since we have not had any meetings or reunions in the last several years, this position has not seen much work.
Time estimate: an hour a month; with more duties: up to three hours per month.

Vice-President: Obviously takes over for the president as needed. In the past this position has sometimes included the historian's role of researching and responding to queries.
Time estimate: an hour a month; with historian duties: up to five hours per month.

Secretary-Treasurer: The secretary's duties here come in spurts (shortly after a newsletter comes out). It has at times also included directing queries to the correct person. This position in the past coordinated reunions, which used to be pot-luck suppers but more recently changed to dinner in a restaurant in the Mendon-Uxbridge area, the "home" of our ancestors. The main tasks would be coordinating reservations and working on the program with help from the executive board. It would not be necessary to live in the area. The treasurer's tasks include keeping track of dues, and paying bills.
Time estimate: two hours per month (generally twice a year with sporadic times between); with reunion involvement: up to twenty to twenty five hours a year.

Board Members: This board serves as the directional board for the TFA, including giving valuable advice on different concerns of the board and its members. Our board has come from many states, thus more recently we have communicated by email. An example of a possible discussion topic for the board to discuss: we have had interest in granting funds to support refurbishing Taft gravestones.
Time estimate: one hour a month; with more involvement: up to 3 hours per month.

Research / Historian: This position has been unfilled (except by your newsletter editor) since Neil Todd's death. When people query the TFA, the research can be relatively simple if we have information in our database (although it usually leads to more research which in turn adds to our knowledge). If we have little or no information, then it can require looking up censuses, vital records, etc. Currently compiling databases for future use (censuses, vital records, gravesites, etc) is being done as time permits by the editor. This could become a committee – we have a few members who are willing to help scan documents etc. under someone's guidance.
Time estimate: two hours per month; with more involvement: as much time as you want.

Newsletter Editor: This position includes the writing, editing, and disseminating of the semi-annual newsletter. Information and articles are pulled together in early June and December. Currently all other queries come to the newsletter editor. Flights of fancy are allowed in finding articles, photos, and fillers.
Time estimate: twenty-four hours twice a year plus copying and mailing (usually runs about 4-5 days from beginning to end); one could write-up articles on a more continual basis.

I believe the time has come when we need to create a viable website. David W. Taft has nobly helped us over the years; but I think we need to create a more complete and systematic presentation. This would require a board decision on what should go online, what program would be easiest, least costly, and most flexible for us to use. Thus we really need a Website manager or co-managers who could input what we have, what we receive, etc.

Time estimate: first would be choosing a program; second would be inputting all our information (only brothers' lines or perhaps all our databases?); third would be maintenance. Or do we hire someone to do this?

In line with this, it would be beneficial to resurrect the Brothers Lines researchers. In the past we had an individual who would follow up the information and research on each brother and become the expert or go-to person on Thomas, Daniel, Joseph, Robert, and Benjamin Taft and Matthew Taft.

Those are the positions and tasks I see as our core involvement. You may have other thoughts and suggestions. Let me know your thoughts and if you can help: patmarkallen@gmail.com

Roy Henry sends in another interesting Taft connection… with Jimmie Rodgers

We have written about the Taft Hotel in NY before (see TTT #51 (Dec 2006) p 9) but we didn't realize that it had a connection with Jimmie Rodgers, the "Father of Modern Country Music."

Jimmie Rodgers is well-known to have been an inspiration for such artists as Gene Autry and Jimmie Davis, while others including Hank Williams and Waylon Jackson were influenced as well.

Jimmie Rodgers was born in Pine Springs, MS, the son of a railroad man and a wife who died of TB in 1904. He hung around theaters and worked while a teenager on the railroads. By 1920 he was an itinerant brakeman. He had two failed marriages, not unusual for a traveling musician. In 1924 he was diagnosed with TB and by 1927 had moved to NC where he worked with the Jimmie Rodgers trio. He then recorded for Victor Talking Machine Company.

He moved to NY and recorded the "Blue Yodel" which became his first million seller. A true showman, he promoted himself as both "The Singing Brakeman" and "America's Blue Yodeler" and knew how to pose himself for photos. By the end of the 1920s he was wealthy and successful touring the nation, "living high and hard." He toured with Will Rogers raising money for families devastated by the Depression and the lingering drought.

Soon however, tuberculosis caught up with him and he died at the Taft Hotel in New York City on 29 May 1933.

Source: photo from rockhall.com; article unknown

Welcome to your family and ours

Edwin G. Taft of Glenmont, NY announces the birth of his grandson, Theodore Carsten Mathews Taft, who was born 25 Sep 2014, the son of Greg and Melanie (Mathews) Taft.

Theodore Carsten Mathews Taft is the son of Gregory Steven (Edwin Griffin, Niles N., Rev. Frank Niles, Emery Proctor, Proctor, Timothy, Asa, Gideon, Robert, Robert, Robert) Taft.

Linda Kingsberry sends greetings and information on her family

Each year Linda creates a holiday newsletter with great photos and all the activities her family has gone through during the previous year.

Three of the happiest events:

1. The birth of their fifth grandchild, Kailee Kairyn Newberry born on 17 Jan 2012, the daughter of Lionel and Amber Newberry.

2. Son Greg graduated from Western NE CC in 2012 and transferred to Univ NE - Lincoln. He left for Japan in Sep 2013 as an exchange student.

3. A grand 50th Wedding anniversary for Elden and Linda on 22 Jul 2012 put on by their children and Amber's parents (and congratulations from TFA too)

Unfortunately in May 2013 Linda was leaving Wal-Mart when she was hit by a pickup truck, ending up under the vehicle, and doing severe damage to her leg, especially her left heel. As chief caretaker for her daughter Renee, this was an especially hard blow; however, the family has rallied, as usual, and is managing well with their usual good nature. Linda has also bought a spiffy new sewing machine and is once again making 18" doll clothes.

We certainly wish them a much easier year ahead with best health and happiness.

Linda Rae (Savage) Kingsberry is the daughter of Lynn Marion Savage (Serrel Taft Savage, Heil Savage and Ruth Adelaide (Serrel, Benedict, Mijamin, Nathan, Mijamin, Benjamin, Robert) Taft.

In Memoriam

Donna L. Williams

Donna L. Williams, wife of Donald Earl Williams, was born 15 Aug 1935 in Bellevue, PA, the daughter of Edward H. and Dorothy (Stahl) Wilcox, and died 18 Jul 2013 in Wooster, OH. Donna and Donald were married 20 Feb 1960 and lived in IL, MO, IA and TN.

Donna was an audit clerk and active in founding the Cystic Fibrosis Chapter in Memphis, TN. She was a member of the Pleasant Hill Baptist Church and enjoyed sewing, handcrafts and reading.

Survivors include her husband, a daughter, Susan (Greg) Perelka of Sagamore Hills; and grandchildren, Bryan, Branden and Benjamin Perelka. She was preceded in death by her parents; a son, Nelson E. "Ned" Williams; and a brother, George S. Wilcox.

Our sincere sympathies go out to member Donald Earl Williams as he holds his memories of his life partner dear to his heart.

Source: The Daily Record, Wooster, OH

We like an Octogeezer with spunk...

Donald Earl Williams also writes to tell us:

Right now I am recovering from a nasty fall and four cracked ribs. Not good for an octogeezer. Also last year my wife of 53 years went home to be with the Lord after suffering many years with two major maladies, including cancer. My fall happened a month before the one year anniversary of her death.

Looking through my genealogical data again was an interesting project. There is a convoluted relationship of families - Taft, Chapin, Fletcher, Whitin, Batchellor, Wood, Spring and others. My wife and I were in the area in 2007 and visited in Whitinsville, Mendon and other places in Mass. We ate at the Cock 'n Kettle one evening and the manager showed us some old pictures of the home. Pine Grove Cemetery in Whitinsville contains a great many of the Fletcher family lots and burials. There is a large lot with Col. James Fletcher. If I remember correctly near it a Taft monument, but I am not sure which Taft. Also in the cemetery near the Fletcher lots is a Taft monument (Israel and Submit Taft).

Col. Wood was the commanding officer of the local military unit during the Revolution, Major Bazaleel Taft was in the same unit, as was Lt. James Fletcher (son-in-law of Col Wood, and was later Col Fletcher). Paul Whitin married James Fletcher's daughter and so that story began.

One interesting story concerns Lt. Sam Fletcher, who served in the Civil War. Two of his brothers were killed in the war, as was a Chapin cousin. Sam Fletcher was a graduate of Brown University and was an engineer.

My father, Earl Fletcher Williams, was the son of George L. Williams and had relocated to Whitinsville from Warren, ME. George eventually became Chief Carpenter for the Whitin Machine Works. His family goes back many generations, tying to the Wentworth, Leach, and Standish families and its many connections to the Mayflower plus the Wentworth family, with its connections back to the Domesday Book (1066) and William the Conqueror.

Earl Fletcher Williams is the son of George Lysander Williams and Ethel May Fletcher (Lewis Clark Fletcher, Ephraim Spring Fletcher and Margaret Ann Chapin, Phineas Chapin and Eunice Taft. Eunice Taft was the d/o Bezaleel (Josiah, Daniel, Robert) Taft and Abigail (Jacob, Israel, Robert, Robert) Taft.

We would love to hear from you – photos, stories, write an article. We are interested.

A Life Well Lived, A Retirement Well Earned

Recently we received an email from the Rt. Rev. Archimandrite Robert F. Taft, S.J., F. B. A. , the recently retired Professor Emeritus of Oriental Liturgy at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, Italy, who currently lives in Weston, MA.

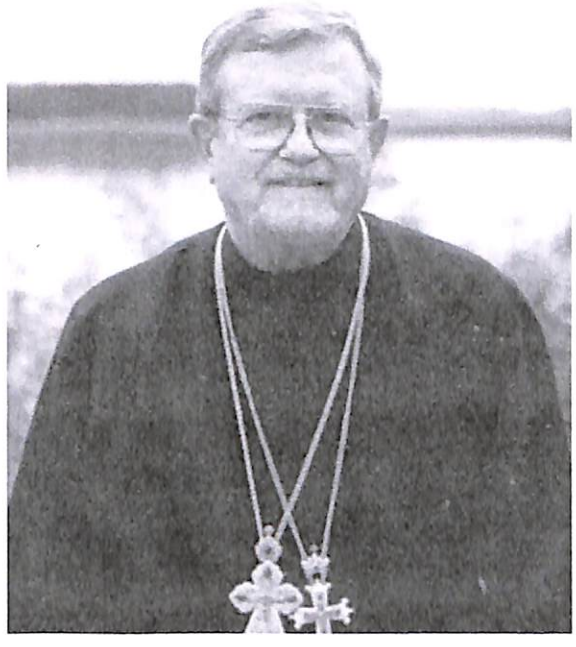
Fr. Taft, another octogenarian (or octogeezer as our other cousin calls himself, see p 4) has become interested in his family history having received documents on the subject from his brother, James L. Taft.

Fr. Taft was born 9 Jan 1932 in Providence, RI, the son of Judge James L. and Katherine M. (McGrath) Taft. He graduated from LaSalle Academy in Providence, and entered the New England Province of the Society of Jesus. After receiving his M.A. in philosophy from Boston College in 1956, he was assigned to the Iraqi Mission where he spent three years teaching at Baghdad College. He then completed his M.A. in Russian Studies at Fordham University, later theology at Weston College and was ordained a priest in the Byzantine-Slavonic (Russian) Rite in 1963. He did his final year of Jesuit formation in Belgium and continued his studies in Rome, receiving his doctorate in Eastern Christian Studies in 1970. He earned many more degrees during the ensuing years.

Over the course of his 37 years at the Pontifical Oriental Institute he "served as a consultor of the Vatican Congregation for the Oriental Churches, while penning 28 books and over 800 published articles and reviews written in English, French and Italian. He speaks fluent English, French, Italian, German and Russian and has taught and lectured in Armenia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Egypt, England, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Russia, Slovakia, Turkey, Ukraine, and the US and Vatican City.

His major life's work is a six-volume monograph series entitled 'A History of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom'. Fr. Taft has received numerous honors and awards. In 1998 he founded and became Editor-in-Chief of the monograph series, 'Anaphorae Orientales' for the publication of critical editions of the Eucharistic prayers in all the Oriental Christian languages.

Robert F. Taft was the son of Judge James L. (Edgar M., Sylvester, Seth, Otis, Thomas, Thomas, Thomas, Robert) Taft.



What does this all mean?

Fr. Robert F. Taft, SJ, has been called "A Jesuit Bridge-builder in Rome" for his career's work in "crossing ecclesiastical cultures helping to reverse centuries-old suspicions between Eastern and Western Christianity."

He noticed that "among the underdogs in the Catholic fold were the eastern-rite churches in communion with Rome. 'These people had been kicked around in the Catholic Church, much like Indians on a reservation in the United States' he recalls… 'A major work of the Jesuits today should be repairing that harm' caused by centuries of misunderstanding between Eastern and Western churches, he says."

After the fall of communism in 1989 Fr. Taft was actively engaged in assisting in the restoration of the persecuted and suppressed churches in the former Soviet East Bloc. Because of this particular work, he was ordained into the honorary Dignity of Mitred Archimandrite in 1998 by the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church.

His scholarly work is equaled by his devotional life, according to Sr. Vassa Larin, a Russian Orthodox nun who did her doctoral work with Fr. Taft in Rome.

There is so much more to learn about this gentleman that wouldn't fit in this space. We are honored to have him as a cousin.

Source: photo and quotes from www/skmem.org p 18

In Memoriam

Martha Helen (Taft) Slade

Martha Taft Slade was born in San Jose, CA on 15 Feb 1919, the daughter of Arlo Irving and Helen Martha (Dice) Taft, and died 31 May 2014 in Paradise, CA.

"The only child of a bookkeeper and a one-room schoolteacher, Martha grew up in Corning and Gerber, and rode the school bus to Red Bluff Union High School, graduating in 1935. She received a degree in economics from UC Berkeley in 1939. Martha worked as a secretary in the Bay Area until she met Bill Slade at Audubon Camp in 1953. They were engaged a week later.

"The Slades lived in Willows, Exeter, and Calexico, where Bill was a high school principal and Lieutenant Colonel (Reserve) in the Army. During those years, Martha was active in the League of Women Voters and the Association of University Women. The Slades moved to Paradise in 1969. Martha resided at her home on Wagstaff Road for 44 years until shortly before her death. She also maintained a vacation home in Mineral, CA for over 70 years.

Photo and article from www.legacy.com 31 May 2014)

"Martha was an active member of the Military Officers Association of America for decades and a life member of the Lassen Park Foundation. She had a keen interest in local history and was an instrumental member of many state and local historical associations, serving on the boards of the Conference of California Historical Societies and the Bidwell Mansion Association for 30 years and 10 years, respectively. She was President of the Butte County Historical Society and Paradise Fact and Folklore. She was a life member of the Gold Nugget Museum, the Tehama County Museum Association, and the Tehama County Genealogical and Historical Society.

"Martha was an accomplished writer and editor. In the '70s and '80s, she wrote a column called "Rear View Mirror" for the Paradise Post and was an editor of the magazines "Diggin's" and "Tales of the Paradise Ridge." From 2000-2002, she wrote an 8-volume, single-spaced autobiography. Martha loved reading, writing, nature, backroads travel, classical and jazz music, sewing, knitting, interesting people, and cats."

She is survived by two daughters, Mary Slade of Paradise and Anne Slade Alexander of Irvine, CA, and two grandchildren.

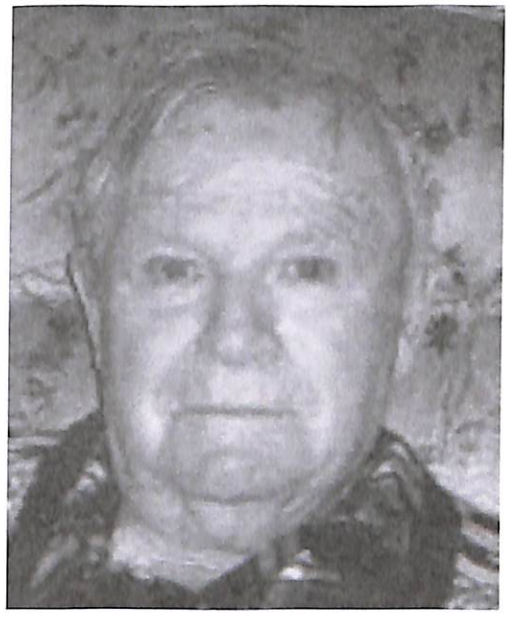
Martha Helen (Taft) Slade was the daughter of Arlo Irving (Florizel Adoniza, Don Carlos, Zadoc Lovell, Nathan, Daniel, Daniel, Robert) Taft.

Bidwell Museum

Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park is located in Chico, CA and has extensive grounds to visit as well as the Bidwell Mansion. The mansion is sited along the Big Chico Creek. It was built by John and Annie (Kennedy) Bidwell and relives a part of the early history of CA. Bidwell was a business manager for John Sutter and personally carried the first gold sample discovered in CA to be assayed in San Francisco, according to the Park's brochure. As a miner and a merchant he had his own gold mine and used that money to further the efforts of CA as a Congressman from CA.

Source: information and photo from Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park brochure.

In Memoriam



Earl Leroy Boughton

Earl Leroy Boughton, 93, of Saegertown, formerly of Venango and Harmonsburg, was born 12 May 1921 in Endicott, NY, son of Earl Edwin and Lillian (Westerfall) Boughton, and passed away 14 May 2014 at the Crawford County Care Center, Saegertown, PA.

On October 25, 1943 Earl married Evelyn Ella Daniels, who preceded him in death on June 18, 2008.

He was a member of the First Baptist Church of Meadville for many years.

"Following over 30 years of employment, Earl retired from the former Conrail Railroad where he was employed as a foreman in the Car Shop. He previously had been employed by Erie Lackawanna. A veteran of World War II, Earl served his country in the U.S. Navy aboard the U.S.S. WASP. He was a former member of the National Campers and Hikers Association where he enjoyed traveling to camping conventions in many different states with his wife Evelyn. For 22 years, Earl traveled to Harlingen, TX with his wife to spend their winters until 2007. Earl loved camping, was an avid painter, enjoyed going square dancing, and collecting model railroads. He had several model train boards displaying his different trains and tracks. One of Earl's favorite pastimes included compiling genealogy trees for both his wife Evelyn's family and his family." He communicated with TFA many times for over twenty-five years.

Earl is survived by a daughter Linda Elaine (Bob) King of Harmonsburg with whom he lived for the last four years, two grandchildren Heather (Mark) Ruhl, Mike (Amanda) King, three great grandchildren Jarrot and Hailley Ruhl and Annabelle King, two brothers Clyde (Doris) Boughton, Crosby (Ruth) Boughton both of Susquehanna, a daughter in law Marilyn Boughton of Venango, several nieces and nephews. In addition to his wife Evelyn of 64 years and his parents, Earl was preceded in death by a son Jerry Allen Boughton, a great grandchild Victoria King, a brother Douglas Boughton, and a sister Joyce Testa. *(source: Mizner Funeral Home online)*

Earl Leroy Boughton was the son of Earl Edwin (Leroy Erwin, George Myron Boughton and Livonia Estella (Henry, Job, Silas, Stephen, Benjamin, Robert) Taft.

Cont. from p 1

desired to get nearer town so sold his residence and bought the Johnson place on Sutton Avenue which he has remodeled into a beautiful home."

Mr. Taft is a member of the GAR, the AF and AM Lodge, and a trustee of North Oxford Baptist church. He is interested in politics and is a staunch republican. Mrs. Taft is a member of the Relief Corps and the O.E.S. Clara Barton Chapter.

John Allen Taft was the son of Allen (Elkanah, Nathaniel, Thomas, Thomas, Robert) Taft.

Sources: "Stockwell-Dodge, A Genealogy" 1962 by Walter Stockwell Taft; Mendon Newspaper 17 Jul 1919, 1921 (provided by Dorothy Taft Barre)

If your label reads 2010, you will no longer receive this newsletter. Please contact our treasurer right away, so you don't miss the next newsletter. Thank you.

In Memoriam

Robert Stanley Taft

Barb Harrington, a long-time member who has sent us much great information, recently included information on her father:

Robert S Taft was born 12 Mar 1915 in Winona, MN , the son of James Olcott and Gertrude (Watson) Taft. He attended Carleton College and played many sports, including football. Taft was chosen an All-American tackle by Sport Pictorial and was recruited by the Cincinnati Browns a few years later. He married Ann Fredin in Minneapolis, MN in 1941.

Robert enlisted in the Navy on 8 Dec 1942. He served first with the Beach Jumpers Unit A in Capri, and then aboard PT-511, in the 35 MTB RON (Motorized Torpedo Boats Squadron) where he participated in D-Day and earned the Bronze Star and the Distinguished Service Cross (Britain). He also served off the coast of Italy and in the South Pacific.

After the War, Robert returned to MN where he worked for the Telephone Company, moving several times, from MN to NE to NJ to IA. In IA he worked for Northwestern Bell as a Labor Relations Supervisor and was well thought of by the unionists there as being an honest, good man. He suffered a heart attack when he was 48, so he quit smoking, but he succumbed to another massive heart attack in 1973, when he was just 57.

He is survived by his best friend, Ann, and his five children: Marion, Robert, Barbara, Arthur, and Martha.

Photos from files of Barbara Taft Harrington

Robert Stanley Taft was the son of James Olcott (Joseph Newell, Rufus, Ephraim, Silas, Benjamin, Robert) Taft.

"Ensign Describes 'Picnic' of Being Target for Nazi Guns" (*source: Minneapolis Daily Times 12 Nov 1943*)

"Ensign Bob Taft, 4600 Fremont Av. S., who has had such 'hazardous assignments as making his small crash boat a deliberate target for enemy shore batteries,' was back in Minneapolis on leave today and feeling apologetic because his squadron 'really had a picnic.' Taft, 28, commanded an aircraft rescue boat. He and his crew, at times, dashed in close to the Sicilian and Italian shores to draw enemy fire and spot targets.

"TARGET" TOO FAST

"'And next day, the big cans— the destroyers—would go in to silence them,' Taft said. 'But what we did wasn't so much. They could hardly hit us, because we had such speed.' From the time he arrived, in June, 1943, until he left to spend a short leave at home and proceed to duty elsewhere, his squadron of about 150 didn't lose a man in operations.

"Taft figured in obtaining the surrender of Ischia, an island off Naples. He carried to Ischia the naval commander who accepted the island's capitulation. From where the little aircraft rescue boats and their crews sat on guard in the harbor they could occasionally see a big limousine, carrying the commander, an Italian lieutenant colonel and the town's mayor, through the streets, festooned with flowers showered upon the welcome 'conqueror's' car by the war-sick Italians.

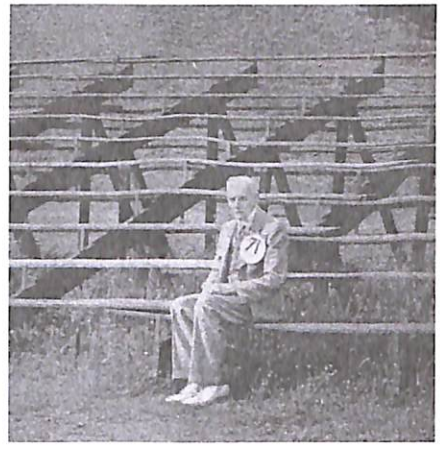
RESCUED FLIERS

A sidelight on the surrender was the release of five American army fliers, who had spent about a week there, technically as prisoners of war, but actually nearer to being prize guests at a party. They had been wined, permitted to go out at night to see the ruins of an old castle, and had a generally restful time of it. 'And they didn't like it too well to be 'rescued',' Taft chuckled.

Taft had opportunities to talk to a number of captured Nazis. 'The officers,' he said, 'were a cocky bunch. They couldn't understand how we got there. They 'knew' their subs were sinking 'everything' in the Atlantic. They 'knew' our east coast cities, including New York, had been bombed to pieces. They were startled to be captured.

'But I also came back on a boat carrying about 500 prisoners. The bums we brought back were much inferior—mostly kids looking as young as 15, or men 45 or older. Many of them were from the Russian front.They were scared of the Russians. They moaned that the Russians were 'atrocious'—that they blew up German hospitals. They didn't want any more war, and especially any more Russians. When Nazi officers tried to engineer a jailbreak in the Straits of Gibraltar, a German private tipped off the ship's officers. The privates didn't want to make a break,' only to go back through Spain and on to the front again.'"

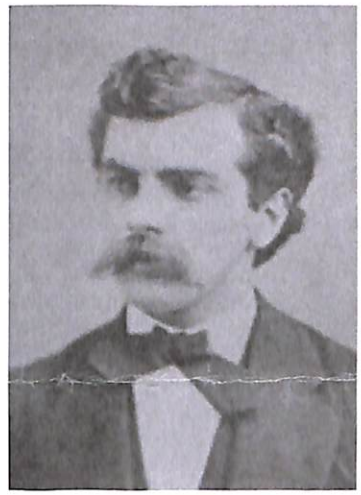
Stalwart alums



David Lowell sent us a clipping from Life magazine *(1941 Jul 14 sent in by Trevor Teele)* showing Royal Taft of Dunmore, PA as the sole surviving among 45 members of Cornell's first class in 1871. It goes on to state that at the reunion he won the attendance award… with 100% participation.

David wondered if this man was a close relation to Gov. Royal Taft of RI. Gov. Royal Taft (1823-1912) was the son of Orsmus and Margaret (Smith) Taft and was descended from Robert ,rather than Daniel, Taft.

This Royal Taft was born in 1849 probably in Hawley, PA, the son of Eunice Atkinson and Charles Valentine (Royal, Daniel, Daniel, Daniel, Robert) Taft. He died in 1941 shortly after the upper photo was taken.



"His grandfather, Royal Taft, had lived at West Woodstock, CT and Yonkers before moving to New York, where he kept a grocery store until 1819, when he moved to the tiny settlement in northeastern PA, which would later bear his name. Operating a tavern and a store, Royal built homes and business buildings, became Postmaster and was generally prosperous. Of his eight children, four daughters died before the age of 12, and only three sons lived to maturity. Thomas Valentine, Charles Valentine, and Theodore Warner Taft all settled in the nearby town of Hawley, where they raised their families."

Royal Taft graduated with a B.S. in agriculture and was a member of Phi Kappa Psi. After graduation he helped run the family's general store and then taught for several years. Subsequently he worked for the Scranton Post Office. His photographs and diaries are in the Cornell University Archives (Collection 37-5-61).

Sources: second photo from the Ezra Cornell Centennial Exhibition entitled "By His Own Exertions."; TTT No 13 Nov 1987 p 9)

It's great when we can help

Nick and Kathy Lester are hooked now; and we long-time members know what that means!

"We just got our issue of Taft Talk and read it cover to cover. We were so thrilled to be mentioned. It's so timely because we're working on our trip to the east with a stop in Mendon in August. So we'll use the map from 1967 to help us find the Taft Monument, the Taft Library and the Old Cemetery. When looking on find-a-grave, I found that there's a Daniel Taft buried in the old cemetery that is a son of Robert, brother of Benjamin. There's also a Seth with no dates. We're wondering if it could be Seth (1739-1781). If you have any other suggestions of things we could see in Mendon or nearby, we would welcome them. It's such a coincidence that we found out about Mendon because our previous trip plans were taking us from Stonington, CT to Watertown, MA and Mendon is right on the way.

"We so appreciate the information that you e-mailed us. It helped us to learn where the Taft farm was in Haney Ridge, Crawford Co WI. I don't know if I mentioned that it's just been within the past year that we've learned about our connection to the Tafts. Nick's parents were divorced and connections were lost until then. Now we've become close to a cousin and he lived in Haney Ridge and went to school at the Taft school but he wasn't aware that that was the site of the Taft farm. Now we're anxious to make another trip there to find the school and the farm."

Here is the information on the two Seth Tafts of Mendon, MA and their burial sites:

1. Seth Taft (1729-1794) was the son of Mary Chapin and Robert (Robert, Robert) Taft. He was buried in the Old Cemetery, Mendon, MA. His son Seth Taft (1754-1816) was also buried in the Old Cemetery, Mendon, MA.
2. Seth Taft (1739-1781) was the son of Mary Lewis and Stephen (Benjamin, Robert) Taft. He was buried in the Chestnut Hill Cemetery, Mendon, MA.

Taft Family Association Offic[illegible]s

President: still searching
Vice President & Genealogist: now searching
Secretary/Treasurer: Pat Allen, 77 Greenfield Rd. , Montague, MA 01351; patmarkallen@gmail.com
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